

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Davis To Examine DHS Terrorism Grants

Why Should National Capital Region Absorb Huge Cut in Funding?

What: Government Reform Committee Oversight Hearing,
“Regional Insecurity: DHS Grants to the National Capital Area”

When: THURSDAY, June 15, 2006, 10:00 A.M.

Where: ROOM 2154, RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

Background: When the Homeland Security Department changed its evaluation process for preparedness grants, the announced goal was to direct more funding to states and localities that had a higher risk of being terrorism targets.

“The department is investing federal funding into our communities facing the greatest risk and demonstrating the greatest need in order to receive the highest return in our nation's security,” DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff said in January.

Yet, when the grants were announced last month, the result was shocking. Both the National Capital Region and the New York City metropolitan area received substantial cuts – about 40 percent, in each case – in their grant funding under the Urban Area Security Initiative program. UASI is the largest piece of the Homeland Security Grant Program

This hearing will focus on the significant and disruptive reduction in funding for the National Capital Region and how these cuts could affect the security and readiness of the Nation's Capital.

Like New York, the National Capital Region not only remains a prime target for terrorists – it was one of the two targets hit by Al Qaeda operatives during the September 11th attacks.

Chairman Davis and the Committee are concerned that the Homeland Security Department has shoved aside common sense in favor of what appears to be an overly elaborate system of marginally relevant evaluation.

In addition to attempting to more directly tie preparedness grants with risk, starting with this fiscal year's grant process, DHS also took into account how well the applications from states and urban areas reflected the department's goals of prevention, protection, response, and recovery.

Applications were evaluated by multiple criteria, including risk (based on number of potential targets, density of population and other factors), need, and how well they matched DHS's prevention goals and the department's other guidelines for grant proposals. Finally, the grant applications were subject to a multi-stage review, including a determination of the "effectiveness" of the proposal conducted by peer groups consisting of subject-matter experts from different communities around the nation.

Witnesses:

George Foresman, Under Secretary for Preparedness, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Edward D. Reiskin, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, the District of Columbia

Robert Crouch, Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness, Commonwealth of Virginia

Dennis Schrader, Director, Office of Homeland Security, State of Maryland

David Robertson, Executive Director, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

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